

Post-Exile Prophets
FATE OF FALSE TEACHERS

Tuesday, September 16
Reading: Zechariah 13:2-6

Zechariah 13:2 *"On that day, I will banish the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more," declares the LORD Almighty. "I will remove both the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land."*

The nation of Israel had a consistent problem with false prophets. Old Testament history is filled with false prophets leading the people to worship the idols of the surrounding nations. Jesus warned that "many false prophets will appear and deceive many people" (Matthew 24:11). Revelation tells us of the false prophet who will lead the false world religion just before Jesus returns. Even today there are many false prophets and teachers who lead people away from God.

When Messiah returns, He will not only cleanse His people from sin but will remove the idols and false teachers from His kingdom. So thorough will be the change God brings to their lives that the very names of their old idols will no longer be remembered. If a false prophet does arise, his own parents will condemn him "because you have told lies in the LORD's name" (see Deuteronomy 13:6-11 for the laws concerning false prophets).

The false prophets were always loud and bold in proclaiming their false message. But in Messiah's kingdom reign, false prophets will be ashamed and try to hide their true identity. They will not wear the typical dress of a prophet¹ and will claim to be an ordinary farmer. The "wounds on your body" probably refer to the ritual scars that were customary among the pagan religions. They would cut themselves with knives and have pagan symbols carved into their flesh.² These false prophets will try to describe away these marks by saying they came from some injury at a friend's house. So afraid will they be of being exposed.

God has always had hard words for those who lead people astray. One day, He will totally eliminate all false teachers and their wicked ways. But that day has not arrived yet! Today, false teachers are brazen in their attempts to get people to follow them. False religions are plentiful. Worse yet, there are many who claim to be Christians who are preaching a different gospel. As the apostle Paul warned:

2 Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

How do you recognize a false teacher or a counterfeit teaching?

- (1) We recognize the false by knowing the truth! We must know God's Word and then we will be able to spot false teachings.
- (2) What do they say about Jesus? Does it agree with what the Bible teaches?
- (3) Is salvation by grace through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus or by some 'work' you perform?
- (4) Do they teach repentance or some self-help principle?
- (5) What do their lives reveal about their motives? Are they in it for God's glory or their own? Do they focus on outward actions instead of a personal relationship with God? Do they point people to Jesus or to themselves?

¹ 2 Kings 1:7-8; Matthew 3:4

² 1 Kings 18:28; Deuteronomy 14:1-2